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Document traces U.S. Latin aims

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WASHINGTON — President Reagan, in a secret directive signed earlier this year, authorized possible new economic sanctions against Nicaragua and diplomatic pressures on Mexico to force both governments to moderate their policies in Central America.

The directive also instructed Secretary of State George P. Shultz once again to warn the Soviet Union, Cuba and Nicaragua that the United States "will not tolerate" the deployment in Nicaragua of advanced combat aircraft or Cuban troops.

It also ordered the Pentagon to activate plans for more military maneuvers in the region this year to deter any military activity by Nicaragua against its neighbors and maintain "steady pressure" on the Sandinista government of Nicaragua. Although administration officials privately have ascribed similar purposes to the exercises, publicly Mr. Reagan has denied they had any special meaning.

"I think these maneuvers are something we've done before," Mr. Reagan said in an April news conference. "They're not something unusual or aimed at anyone down there. ... All they are is war games."

Approval for the admonitions to Moscow, Managua and Havana and pressures on Mexico and the Sandinistas was contained in a National Security Decision Document signed by Mr. Reagan in February. Portions of the document, stamped

"Top Secret-Sensitive," were examined by Knight News Service.

A White House official, asked to confirm the contents of the document, had no comment.

The directive was approved after a National Security Council session at the White House in which the president and his chief advisers reviewed objectives and options for U.S. policy in Central America during 1984.

All the objectives, the document said, would be coupled with an escalation of U.S. "public diplomacy" in Latin America and Western Europe. That would be designed to counter a "Soviet-Cuban-Nicaraguan propaganda campaign" against U.S. policy in Central America, particularly in El Salvador, according to the document. "Our diplomatic and communications efforts should seek expanded political support for El Salvador from non-Communist governments," it said.

The segment on Nicaragua asked policy-makers to "review and recommend such economic sanctions against Nicaragua that are likely to build pressure on the Sandinistas." The directive ordered the preparation of an "Action Plan" on these sanctions that was to have been delivered to the National Security Council by March 1. That document remains secret.

The document did not specify any concrete sanctions being considered against Nicaragua, but an administration source said one possibility was a ban on Nicaraguan agricultural products still entering the United States. It is unclear whether this option was dropped or is pending. A State Department official said no further sanctions against Nicaragua are about to be announced.

Already the administration has succeeded in denying certain international loans to Nicaragua, has reallocated its sugar quota among U.S. allies in the region and has reduced to a minimum the amount of trade with the country.

A one-paragraph section on Mexico authorized officials to "intensify ... diplomatic efforts with the Mexican government to reduce its material and diplomatic support for the communist guerrillas [in El Salvador] and its economic and diplomatic support for the Nicaraguan government."

The directive said pressure should be applied "bearing in mind overall U.S. interests and relations with Mexico," apparently to avoid damaging diplomatic ties between Washington and the government of President Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado in Mexico City.

It instructed the State Department to prepare a study "of ways in which we can supplement our persuasive efforts" with Mexico. That report, which is still secret, was to have been delivered to the White House on February 24.

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